

VZCZCXRO2031  
RR RUEHMA RUEHPA  
DE RUEHAB #0758/01 3551300  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 211300Z DEC 09  
FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5611  
INFO RUEILB/NCTC WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ABIDJAN 000758

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

STATE FOR S/CT (ATTN: RHONDA SHORE), DS/IP/AF AND AF/W

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [IV](#)  
SUBJECT: COTE D'IVOIRE: 2009 COUNTRY REPORTS ON TERRORISM

Ref: STATE 109980

¶1. (SBU) Summary: There were few changes or emerging trends regarding counterterrorism in Cote d'Ivoire in 2009. The ongoing political crisis continues to weaken police and security forces and increase the risk that foreign terrorists can use Cote d'Ivoire as an operational or financial base. Porous borders, widespread public corruption, and weak police and security services foster activities, e.g., money laundering and trafficking in drugs, arms and persons, that can be exploited by terrorists. Both the central government's security forces in the south and the former rebel New Forces of the north are primarily focused on internal security concerns. To date, violence associated with the country's crisis has not been associated with any international terrorist organizations, and there is scant evidence to indicate a significant threat of a terrorist attack. End Summary.

#### Cote d'Ivoire's Security Environment

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¶2. (SBU) Cote d'Ivoire does not engage in any major counterterrorism efforts. Operational elements of terrorist groups are not known to be present, and terrorism is not generally perceived to be a threat in Cote d'Ivoire. Intelligence, police and security services (the central government's in the south and the former rebel New Forces in the north) are predominately focused on each other and maintaining domestic stability. We believe that Cote d'Ivoire would cooperate in extraditing known terrorists should such a case arise. Justice officials, although inefficient in the areas of the country administered by the government and hindered from operating normally in areas still under the control of the former rebels, would likely cooperate in assisting with U.S. counterterrorist efforts.

¶3. (SBU) Cote d'Ivoire does not provide political or financial support to any known international terrorist organization. Although members of the Lebanese community in Cote d'Ivoire are known to donate personal income to Hizballah, it is unlikely that the government of Cote d'Ivoire supports or subsidizes any of these financial activities.

¶4. (SBU) On August 6, Ivoirian authorities detained Imam Abd al Menhem Qubaysi, a Hizballah spiritual leader and US Treasury designated terrorist financier, at the airport upon his arrival on a commercial flight from Lebanon. Qubaysi, who lived in Cote d'Ivoire for a number of years, was denied entry at immigration and returned to Lebanon on the same flight. The Lebanese community in Cote d'Ivoire continues to seek permission for his return, unsuccessfully to date.

#### Safe Haven Assessment

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¶5. (SBU) While the Ivorian government does not provide diplomatic support to any international terrorist organization nor provide a safe haven, during 2009 there were uncorroborated reports of members of Al-Qaida in Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) being present in Cote d'Ivoire. However, there have been no indicators that AQIM is

attempting to extend its presence into Cote d'Ivoire.

¶16. (SBU) Cote d'Ivoire remains vulnerable to becoming a possible terrorist safe haven due to porous borders, widespread public corruption, and weak police and security services. As long as police and security forces remain underpaid and committed to internal security, this vulnerability will remain. Measures to prevent the proliferation and trafficking of weapons of mass destruction are unknown; however, as a Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism partner nation, it is likely that Cote d'Ivoire would cooperate with U.S. counterterrorism efforts.

#### Foreign Cooperation

¶17. (SBU) The Ivoirian Ministry of Interior, in cooperation with the United States, uses the Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System (PISCES) at the major airport and seaport to enhance border security. With sanctions in place, there are severe limits to what the US can contribute to Cote d'Ivoire's counterterrorism program. In 2009, 11 Ivoirian officials attended regionally oriented seminars where terrorism was addressed. The Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU), which was formed in 2008, received additional legal authority when Ordinance 637 on terrorism financing became law on November 12, 2009. Although not used to date, the law extends FIU activities to the receipt, analysis, and dissemination of information on transactions suspected of being terrorism related.

¶18. (SBU) In the past five years, there has been no evidence of activity by known terrorist groups in Cote d'Ivoire nor terrorist threats against U.S. citizens. Hizballah elements are present

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within parts of the local community but they are not known to be actively engaged in, or planning for, terrorist activities in Cote d'Ivoire. The Ivoirian government has not provided military or paramilitary training or supplied weapons to any known international terrorist group. There are no known cases of international terrorist groups seeking refuge in Cote d'Ivoire and the GOCI provides no provision of safe haven from prosecution to such groups.

¶19. (U) Embassy Abidjan point of contact for this report is John Bray, RSO, (225) 22-49-45-01 or brayfj2@state.gov.

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